The right information @ the right time — learning how

DOWN AND LOADED

communicators
knowledgeable
accessible
reputable
aware
accurate

library and information
professionals
understand your
information needs

[the right information @ the right time]

Australian
Library and
Information
Association
http://alia.org.au
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Library and Information Services

Access to information — if we were asked to define in three words what service library and information professionals provide, we would probably say something like this. But such a simple phrase cannot even begin to tell us how the library and information professional has developed the knowledge and skill to connect clients with the information they need in a timely fashion.

Information is the library and information professional's business and, through a broad-based course, student professionals develop the knowledge and skills to provide clients with access to information. At the same time they will also be gaining an insight into the wider library and information profession, its aims and objectives so they can situate themselves within it with the understanding that, as a professional, they have a responsibility to remain current with developments that will redefine the contexts in which clients seek access to information.

In order to provide their clients with access to the information they need and want, library and information professionals will have developed a deep understanding of information and how to manage and use it in a multiplicity of contexts. As students, aspiring professionals are introduced to the theories underpinning collecting, developing and organising information in a wide range of formats such as print, electronic and other media; they learn how information is generated and distributed and gain an understanding of how information can be gathered, disseminated and used. In addition, as part of their course, students must learn about bibliographic methods and basic search techniques and how and when to apply these to material in different formats, for example when it is appropriate to use a print-based source rather than conduct an online search.

Complex as managing information is, it is not sufficient simply to know how to manipulate it. Today's professionals also need the opportunity through their course to develop the skills that enable them to evaluate information and library management systems so they can determine that these will function efficiently and cost effectively. They also need to understand management concepts which will allow them to establish priorities, to plan ahead, to budget and to work productively with their colleagues so that their library and information service can operate optimally.

Most importantly library and information professionals work with clients. So that they can effectively satisfy a client's information needs, through their course they will have learned how to understand and analyse what information a client needs and wants; how to determine what material and in what format/s a client's information needs will best be satisfied; and how to assist clients develop information skills which will enable them to independently access and evaluate further information in its various formats.

ALIA as the standards body for the profession plays an important role in the education of new library and information professionals. Through its course recognition program, ALIA works with education providers and consults with other stakeholders — including students and employers of library and information professionals — to ensure that courses in library and information studies equip graduates with the knowledge, skills and capabilities to provide their clients with the right information @ the right time.

Note: ALIA recognised courses at librarian and library technician level are listed on the ALIA website http://alia.org.au/education/courses/. For more information contact Marie Murphy, marie.murphy@alia.org.au. ∎

International conference

Archiving web resources

9–11 November 2004, presented by the National Library of Australia and supported by the Australian Library and Information Association

Web resources form an important part of a nation's documentary and cultural heritage. Institutions with responsibility for collecting and providing long-term access to information face many challenges in extending their responsibility to web resources.

The conference will advance understanding of the issues through presentations on ways in which the web is being used. It will also review progress with addressing the issues at the institution level and through major international research endeavours.

This conference is the first of its kind to be held in Australia. It aims to bring together practitioners and decision makers from key institutions around the world to address issues of mutual concern at the strategic level.

Full details, program and registration form available at http://www.nla.gov.au.